3 The Human Ecology of Romans (Rom. 16.1-27; 1.1-7).

Why Paul Wrote Romans: Ranking the Options according to Explanatory Power [p. 60]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Proponent(s)</th>
<th>Explanatory Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Contain hostile counter-missionaries</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prepare for Spanish mission</td>
<td>Jewett,…Dunn</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theological testament / Defense of the Gospel</td>
<td>Käsemann, Dunn, Bornkamm</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mediation: Weak vs. Strong</td>
<td>Wright, Reasoner, Minear, Donfried</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Counter-missionaries as Subtext [p. 84-86]

• Explicit mention (16:17-20)
• 8 Implicit factors
  - Circumcision controversy
  - ‘Shame-factor’
  - Polemical tone
  - Apostolic credentials

“The foregoing add up to weighty reasons for taking seriously the view that Romans was written…in the context of a need not altogether different from the crisis Paul confronted in Galatia….Romans shows Paul’s keen reading of the radar screen of mission and his determination to pre-empt the influence of teachers insisting on the circumcision of the Gentiles in Rome” (86).

4 ‘Not Ashamed of the Good News [Gospel]’ (Rom. 1.16), pp. 69-86 († 1.24, 26-27?; shame/dishonor 3x!)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is God’s power for integral salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it God’s liberating justice is revealed from faithfulness for faithfulness, as it is written [Hab. 2:4], ‘The Just One will live by [my] faithfulness’ (1.16-17) (see ‘Shame-factor’ above).

“Shame, as Robert Jewett notes over and over in his commentary [2006], is the one thing all Romans wish to avoid. Conversely, honor ranks highest on the Roman scale of values, the pursuit of honor and of things deemed to promote honor sought without embarrassment. Against the assumed background of Roman preoccupation with honor and avoidance of shame, Paul embraces Jesus, a figure recognized to be shameful through and through. ‘A divine self-revelation on an obscene cross seemed to demean God and overlook the honor and propriety of established religious traditions, both Jewish and Greco-Roman’ says Jewett” [2006:137]. Moreover, although Rom. 1.24, 26, 28 says repeatedly that ‘“God gave them up’….this depiction confronts another contrast in Romans when, at a critical point in the argument, Paul alleges that God ‘in his forbearance …had passed over the sins previously committed’ (3.25)” (101). “Much attention has been given to Second Testament and Pauline cultural-anthropological perspectives on honour/shame (Moxnes 1988b:207-18; Brooten 1996:208-12;Jewett 1997:25-73). Few recognize, however, that this perspective signals the third element in Paul’s deconstruction of Romans 1:24, 26-27 (Hanks 2000:92, citing the three shame references: “to be dishonoured in their bodies among themselves… passions of dishonour…unseemliness working; 1:24, 26, 27). “In Rom. 3.21-26…perhaps the most sustained exposition of God’s right-making in the letter, the focus is cross-centered, and the dominant image is the public display of the bloody death of Jesus” (138).

Rom 3:21-26 God's Liberating Justice Made Known thru Messiah Jesus

‘a creed cited by Paul (italics)?

21 But now, apart from Law [3:19-20], God’s liberating covenant justice has been manifested. being attested by the Law and the Prophets, 22 God’s liberating covenant justice through [the] faith/fulness of [Jesus] Messiah for all who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory, 24 being justified/vindicated /welcomed freely by his grace, through the redemption [that came] by Messiah Jesus, *25 whom God set forth publicly as a mercy seat (tabernacle-temple ark covering where sin was expiated/covered/cleaned and divine wrath thus propitiated), to be received by faith in his blood, in order to manifest God’s liberating justice [also implying penal justice for oppression], since God in his forbearance had passed over former sins. 26 to demonstrate in the present critical time his liberating covenant justice, so that he might be both just [in punishing oppression] and justifying [=liberating justice] the one of the faith/fulness of Jesus.
Dialogue in Romans—Two Options

Does Paul resort to dialogue because he is confronting real people and opposing points of view that threaten his mission?

Is the dialogical character of Romans—the animated questions and answers—a teaching technique in the hands of a clever pedagogue?

“Paul…did not need to construct fictitious opponents to make a point because there were actual opponents aplenty. His arena was not the classroom or the controlled environment of the philosophical schools but the battlefield of mission and counter-mission, the latter…evident in Galatians….The questions are straightforward and…many, by my count a full 75” (87-88).

“Question Number One (Rom 2:3):… 2:1-3….Do you imagine, O ‘virtuous’ person (o anthrope), that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? …

“…Douglas Campbell does not think that the voice we hear in Rom. 1:18-32 belongs to Paul….He or they represent(s) a real person and a familiar point of view, but he does not represent ‘Judaism’….The implied adversary is a believer in Jesus who, from the vantage point of smug self-assessment seeks to make Jewish forms and traditions more prominent among Gentile converts….The character that emerges in this scenario, then, is not a staple Jew in the first century, and his theological platform is not that of ‘Judaism’. Even more important, the views expressed in Rom. 1:18-32 represent the views and convictions of this character but not necessarily the views of Paul. Uncertainty as to whether Paul agrees with the interlocutor in Rom. 1:18-32 in the traditional reading of Romans is in this scenario turning into the likelihood that he does not” (93).

“…[In] Rom. 1:18-32, we run into features that are supportive of a voice other than Paul’s….First, we note that there are pivots in the letter between the personal statement about the gospel in 1:16-17, expressed in first person singular, the impersonal litany about sin in 1:18-32, all recounted in third person plural, and the sharp and sudden turn in 2:1-3, all stated in second person singular.

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>They</td>
<td>You</td>
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[Note 35] Jeramy Townsley (‘Paul, the Goddess Religions and Queer Sects: Romans 1:23-28’, JBL 130 [2011], pp. 707-28) documents the complexity of Roman goddess religions and the wide range of temple-based sexual practices. Specifically, the notion of females exchanging ‘the natural use for what is contrary to nature (para physin)’ (1:26b) could refer to orgiastic male-female relations with the female in a dominant and ‘contrary to nature’ role (p. 95). As James E. Miller has shown (1995), the only patristic interpretations evidenced during for the first three centuries took for granted such unnatural heterosexual acts (Hanks 2006).

“Beyond the surface features noted above, less obvious questions arise. ‘First, the passage begins with a ringing missive centered on ‘the wrath of God (orge theou)’ (1:18). For Romans as a whole, by contrast, the dominant concept is ‘the righteousness of God (dikaiosyne theou)’…. One side emphasizes wrath and retribution, the other side righteousness that is primarily understood as right-making.

“….Second…Romans 1.18-32 implies that there is a punitive logic at work in history that anticipates the ultimate punitive horizon awaiting at the eschaton (1:32). Human beings sin by willfully turning to false gods (1:23, 25, 28), reaping in return spiritual, relational, and sexual chaos (1.24, 26, 28)….In Campbell’s reading, by contrast, Paul is not speaking in his own voice; he mimics his opponents ‘fiery rhetorical entrance, which is lit—like that of so many preachers—by the flickering backdrop of hell’ All in all, therefore, wrath and retribution loom large in the world view and theology of the speaker in Rom. 1:18-32.

“Third, the wordplay and structure in the passage are certainly adept, but the basic proposition seems formulaic, and the three-fold repetition accentuates the formulaic construct. Does the indictment represent
Gentile reality fairly? Is the causal linkage between idolatry and sexual misconduct as ironclad as the passage makes it seem?....The possibility that there is a flaw at the core of the formula, a threat to its most basic premise, is suggested by the contrast between the bleak portrayal of the Gentiles in Rom. 1.18-32 and the far more congenial description of Gentile conduct in Rom. 2.14-16.

When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts.…

“It follows…that Paul is not merely nuancing the negative portrayal of Gentile reality in Rom. 1.18-32 but is actually pursuing an opposite representation.…

“Fourth….What is said to be revealed in the gospel (1.17) refers to God’s singular revelation in Jesus Christ. The alleged revelation of God’s wrath (1.18), on the other hand, has as its topic the ongoing, ho-hum reality of idolatry and debauchery of Roman everyday life.…

“Fifth, even though the speaker in the passage says repeatedly that ‘God gave them up’ (1.24, 26, 28), God’s removal from the lives of those given up has the connotation of God’s presence. In other words, God is doing something in the world, the Judge of the world is on the throne, and the divine judgment is not idle. But this depiction confronts another contrast in Romans, when, at a critical point in the argument, Paul alleges that God ‘in his divine forbearance…had passed over the sins previously committed’ (3.25). This verse suggests absence of divine action, God having fallen behind on doing what God is expected to do.…

“Sixth, while it is possible top take the statement that ‘God gave them up’ (1.24, 26, 28) at face value….later in Romans, the assessment comes in for major revision. God did not give them up at all; indeed the entire letter is dedicated to the proposition that God has not given up human beings, Jew or Gentile (5:6-10), and God has not given up on the world (8.19-22). In the main, again, God’s intervention in the world is described in terms of a right-making initiative and not in terms of wrath.

“Seventh, the juncture at which we encounter the first question in Romans raises questions about psychology and persuasive strategy….If the missive concerning Gentile reality in Romans 1.18-32 and the ensuing turning of the tables aimed at Jewish reality in Rom. 2.1-3 are primarily rhetorical constructs, they are bold in the extreme. If, however, Rom. 1.18-32 represents the views and diction of well-spoken troublemakers, and Rom. 2.1-3 represents Paul’s determination to take them to task, the fairness in the representation is greater than the boldness, and there can be no offense….Paul’s representation of that person’s view is to the point, and the rhetorical weaponry he uses to neutralize and counter the view expressed is well matched to the need” (102).

Fictitious opponent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No one in particular in real life</th>
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Rhetorical construct

Gentile sin (1:18-32) and ‘Jewish’ Hypocrisy (2:1-29)

Line running from sin to wrath to retribution

--and only then to right-making

Real opponent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Believer in Jesus, possibly Jewish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>circumcision necessary</td>
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</table>

Speech tailored to actual problem and real danger

Blunt rejoinder to the implied speaker in 1:18-32

Line running from need to right-making, the need not defined in the currency of wrath and retribution

“…..N. T. Wright’s objection that the use of ‘for’ (gar) four times in Rom 1.16-18 is proof of one voice and a seamless argument must be taken seriously, but it is not sufficient to put to rest the impression that another diction and line of thought begins in Rom. 1.18. Most attempts to impose a structure on Romans envision a suture line at 1.18, ‘for’ or no ‘for’….[Note 57:] “While gar usually has a causal or explanatory force, Maximi-lan Zerwick…singles out Rom 1.18 as one of several exceptions. Here gar is closer to de, he notes, and a causal relation to the foregoing sentence (1:17) is not apparent…..” [see Rom. 5.7b for corrective, even contrastive sense] (p. 103).…In a careful study of the transition from divine right-making (1.16-17) to divine wrath (1.18), Daniel Rodriguez puts forward evidence that the particle gar (‘for’) can occur in contexts that do not denote a single speaker or a single point of view….[p. 105, n 63: Daniel Rodriguez, ‘On Gar’d’: Dialogue in LXX Isaiah and Romans’, paper presented to the Biblical Lexicography section, San Diego, November 22, 2014, p. 4]:
“In this representation, *gar* mediates logical connections, but the connection is not simply explanatory or causal. Sometimes ‘well’ and ‘yes’ capture the meaning better than ‘for’. In other words, *gar* can also indicate caveats and a new direction in the argument, and there may be speaker switching. The questions appearing downside from the first question in Romans (2:1-3) fit this scenarios because they all seem aimed at dislodging the speaker in Rom. 1:18-32 from his or her high perch of orthodoxy and moral superiority.…. [cites 2:21-23, then 2:26]:

‘So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?’ (2:26).

“And there it is, as question number 7 in Romans, a reference to circumcision virtually out of the blue, ‘will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?’ This is henceforth—and explicitly—a contested issue in Romans. However, the contested issue has been implicit up to this point. Paul’s comment and question made necessary by the fact that someone is pushing for the Gentile believers in Rome to be circumcised as one element in a continuum that includes the indictment of the Gentiles in Rom 1.18-32. We recall that circumcision was the material point of conflict in the Galatian controversy while insistence on circumcision was not seen as a problem in the wide range of Gentile affiliations with the synagogue in the Jewish Diaspora. *Someone is making circumcision a problem in Rome.* Paul counters that the uncircumcised Gentiles who heeds the dictates of the moral law has nothing to gain by being circumcised (2.26) [(pp. 106-07)]…. 

“Controversy with a real and not merely an imaginary opponent is confirmed by direct reference to people who claim that Paul’s message provides license for loose living …[cites 3.8]. Again, the wrong-headed inference is not rejected by Paul in order to show off his masterful teaching technique. Real people are in view, people who misrepresent Paul while working to promote an alternative message and mission agenda” (p. 113).

“Then and Now. Virtually all interpreters agree that there are at least two groups in the Roman house churches, a majority Gentile group and a minority consisting of Jewish believers in Jesus. When we access the message of Romans by way of the questions…the very first question strengthens the probability that Paul is addressing a third group or entity that was not part of the Roman churches as such (2.3). In Romans, Paul confronts this party and the problem they are creating in Rome….The ‘out-of-the-blue’ mention of circumcision in Paul’s argument (2.25) owes to the role of this entity, Paul countering early and decisively in order to negate its influence (2.14-27)” (p. 113).

Tonstad repeatedly indicates his preference for Douglas Campbell’s conclusion that in Rom 1:18-32 Paul does not expound his own views but those his opponents (2016: 21 indexed references). Hence, unlike the cases of those who conclude from 1:24-27 that Paul condemns all “homosexual” practices (female,1:26; as well as male,1:27), it is not so crucial that Tonstad enter into traditional exegetical debates over the meaning of the key terms (uncleanness, unnatural, shameful/dishonorable passions), nor to the later references in the epistle that deconstruct the negative interpretations of 1:24-27 (Hanks, “Romans,” QBC, 2006). Nevertheless, had he done so, it would have strengthened considerably his preference of Campbell’s view. Similarly significant:

- If the references to “unnatural” female sexual practices in 1:26 does not refer to same-sex acts, but to females resorting to “unnatural” (non-procreative) acts with males (anal/oral sex), an alternative to Campbell’s conclusion provides another possibility that avoids homophobic conclusions (see above).

- The sexual practices of 1:26-27 are not referred to as sinful but as “uncleanness” (1:24; William Countryman, 1988), but Paul later refers to “all things” as “clean” (14:14, 20).

- Although the description of the sexual practices in 1:26-27 as “against nature/unnatural” appears negative, Paul later deconstructs this negative impression when he indicates that even God acts “against nature” by inserting believing Gentiles into the Olive tree as image of Israel (11:21, 24).

- Paul refers to sexual practices as “shameful/dishonorable” passions (1:24, 26-27) but then radically deconstructs the concept, showing that God accomplishes cosmic redemption by Jesus’ shameful cross (3:21-15).
Paul Among the Ecologists [pp. 1-22]

Paul Among [pp. 2-8]
Paul among in recent scholarship: Jews and Gentiles; Jews, Greeks, and Romans; people; cultures; philosophers; prophets; mystics; friends and enemies; postliberals [p. 3]
“Paul…was among Jews and Gentiles as a Jewish believer in Jesus and not as a former Jew crusading against Jewish legalism”
Daniel Boyarin [1994] “claims that ‘Paul was motivated by a Hellenistic desire for the One, which among other things proclaimed an ideal of a universal human essence’. Paul’s perception of human oneness, however, should be attributed to theology and apocalyptic and not, as Boyarin does, to Hellenism” [p. 4]

‘New Perspective’ on Paul
• ‘Judaism’ a religion of grace
• ‘Participation’ more important than ‘justification’
• Controversy over boundary markers such as circumcision

Revelation [pp. 8-12]
Theme of Romans [p. 8]
• Justification (usual view)
• Participation (Schweitzer, Sanders)
• Revelation (overlooked theme)

‘Abba! Father’ “With this image Paul calls to mind a scene drawn from the baptism experience of new believers…(Gal. 4.6; Rom 8.15). The scene captures the transition from slavery to adoption, from distance to intimacy, from subjugation to deliverance, and from fear to trust….The confidence that echoes in the cry brings to mind the trust of Isaac in the Old Testament (Gn. 22.7-8) and the trust of Jesus in his hour of crisis (Mk 14.36).

The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ [pp. 12-16]
Pistis Iesou Christou: Paul’s Faith Language [p. 12]
• faith in Jesus Christ (usual view)
• the faithfulness of Jesus Christ (new view), “The contested phrase ‘encapsulates a story about God’s faithfulness in relation to Jesus’ faithfulness’, says Douglas Harink” [12]

➔ Hab 2.2-3. “God’s answer [to Habakkuk] uses the word ‘vision’ (hazon) twice in these two verses and it refers to the ‘vision’ pronominally eight times, creating the effect of a drumbeat. And what is the vision?….It cannot be understood as anything other than God’s action in the world. It points to something that will happen, it denotes the in-breaking of a singular event, it will bring into view a reality that offers proof of God’s faithfulness. The punch line in God’s answer…projects ‘faithfulness’ in bold letters on the screen” [2.4; 13]…. ‘For the righteousness of God…is revealed in it [Paul’s Gospel] from faithfulness for faithfulness…as it is written, The righteousness shall live by (my) faithfulness’ [Rom 1.16-17; p. 15].

Paul among the Ecologists [pp. 16-22]. “Like the Old Testament prophets, Paul’s vision of redemption includes all creation….The prophets and narrators in the Old Testament are to some extent agrarians of one kind or another….an agrarian in a primary sense even if he bears the credentials of a working man only secondarily (Acts 18.2-3; 20.34-35; 1Thess. 2.9; 2 Thess 3.8)” [p. 21]

Ecological Paul [p. 20]
• Embrace of materiality
• Old Testament echoes and quotations, especially Habakkuk [2.3] and Isaiah [11.1-8]
• Vision of inclusion, non-human creation not left out
• God’s faithfulness to all creation
• Repeated appeals to mercy
• Paul, with P, as servant, not Saul with S, as king
• ‘Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ’
2 Romans and its Most Famous Readers [pp. 23-48; cf. Paul’s Damascus Road vocation]

Origen (185-254), 246 writes first complete Romans commentary; platonic, denigrates body, materiality.
Augustine (354-430) Rom. 13:12-14  conversion in Milan, Italy in 386.
Martin Luther (1483-1546) “the righteousness of God” in Rom. 1.17  conversion, 1514-1519?
John Wesley (1703-91) May 24, 1738 Aldersgate conversion, hearing Luther’s preface to Romans read.
Karl Barth (1886-1968) theological conversion from 19th century liberalism reflected in his Romans, 1919

Conclusion [pp.46-48]: Romans and Its Most Influential Readers [p.47]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Emphasis</th>
<th>Ecological Yield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Origen Participation (spiritual formation)</td>
<td>None direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustine Justification</td>
<td>Slight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther Justification</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Wesley Justification and participation</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Barth Justification</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Origen (185-254), 246 first complete Romans commentary; platonic, denigrates body, materiality:
“Origen’s concern is purely anthropological, and his anthropology denigrates the body and material reality with no holds barred. With regard to ecology, the entire material world is dispensable, a mere interim stage on the soul’s journey from a state of pure immateriality at the beginning to a state of untainted immateriality at the end. Hope means ‘one day to be at rest from these bodily and corruptible matters’. Origen takes his stand on this supposition with no questions or qualifications, so completely a captive of the Platonic conception as to make it virtually the complete opposite of Paul’s [hope for bodily resurrection]” [p. 26].

Augustine (354-430) Rom. 13:12-14  conversion in Milan, Italy in 386. “Augustine had a common-law wife for thirteen years until he came under the influence of Ambrose in Milan. One year into the relationship they had a son together”[p.30].

Martin Luther (1483-1546) “the righteousness of God” in Rom. 1.17  conversion, 1514-1519?
“Luther appeals to Scripture and to conscience, the latter no less important than the former…But Luther’s commitment to the non-use of coercion turned out to be short-lived…Luther soon found reason to relent, denying to others the privilege he had claimed for himself. In 1531, he sided with Melanchton that the death penalty was warranted for the Anabaptists” [33-34].

Wesley (1703-91) 1738 Aldersgate conversion, hearing Luther’s preface to Romans read. “The single pitiful and pitiable blight on this Paul-like biography…was Wesley’s emotional ineptitude in the personal sphere and his spectacularly unhappy marriage to a woman he should not have married in the first place” [40]

Conclusion. “We can only marvel at how widely [Paul’s] interpreters differ and how much concerns contemporary to the respective interpreter influences his reading. In the personal sphere, Origen finds in Romans medicine for his spiritual need; Augustine the key that solves the moral impasse in his experience. Luther the door to a new view of God; Wesley the gateway to experiential knowledge of the Unseen; Barth the voice to let God speak authoritatively and from on high in the twentieth century. In the realm of eco-theology, Origen denigrates the material world within and without his reading of Romans. Augustine accepts materiality but enhances a radical notion of divine caprice. Luther lets divine grace extend to non-human reality even as he, like Augustine, finds in Romans reasons to deny grace to the majority of humans. Barth’s binocular perception includes empathy with non-human creation even thought the eye that triggers the empathy is less sharply focused than the eye that looks for epistemological solace in the era of scientific inquiry. Augustine, Luther, and Barth—these three together—find in Romans the mighty fortress for a theology of divine sovereignty.

“From the standpoint of ecological hermeneutics, one reader stands apart after nearly two millennia of interpretations of Romans. That reader, hands down, is John Wesley. And yet he, too, brings a cracked plate to the table of ecological hermeneutics with his affirmation of the immateriality of the human soul. All the most influential readings of Romans look away or hesitate at the doorway to ecology, lending credence to Ludwig Feuerbach’s (1804-1872) contention that God in the Christian account would rather that ‘there were no world’, the world for that reason ‘hovering between existence and non-existence, always awaiting annihilation’” [p.47].
Romans 3:9-20 Jews as well as Greeks under the power of Sin

9 What, then? Are we [Jews] worse off/at a disadvantage? No, not at all. For we have already made the case that all, both Jews and Greeks are under [the power of] Sin, 10 as it is written:

[1] There is no one who is just, not a single one [Eccles 7:20];
[2] 11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.
12 All have turned aside; together they have become unprofitable/worthless; there is no one who does good/shows kindness, there is not even one [Ps 14:1-3 // 53:1-3];

[3] 13 Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive [Ps 5:9].
[4] The venom of asps/vipers is under their lips [Ps 140:3].
[5] 14 Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness [Ps 10:7 LXX].
[6] 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood; [= violence]
16 ruin and misery are in their paths,
17 and the way of peace they have not known [Isa 59:7-8; Prov 1:16; 3:15-17].
[7] 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes [Ps 36:1].

19 Now we know that whatever the Law says it addresses those who are in the Law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may come under judgment before God. 20 For by works of Law no flesh will be justified before him, since through Law comes full/real knowledge of sin.

Three Categories of Sin in Romans 3 [118]

- ‘false thinking about God
- debasement of language
- resort to violence

“Three broad categories of ‘sin’ are specified, (1) humanity’s estrangement from God (vv. 10-12); (2) humanity’s embrace of untruthful speech (vv. 13-15); and (3) humanity’s penchant for violence (vv. 15-18)….If all are included in the indictment, no one excluded, and if the entire argument aims to prove that Jews and Greeks are in the same boat, there is less reason to single out ‘Jews’ as the primary target” (116). “While the tenor of [Rom 1.18-32, attributed to Paul’s enemies] is accusatory…the tone of Romans 3.10-18 is closer to a lament, and its inventory of ‘sin’ transcends ethnic and religious labels. If, too, sexual promiscuity is the named sin in Rom. 1.18-32, not telling the truth and violence are the named sins here (3.10-18) [121].

Idolatry, Debasement of Language, and Violence [121-28]. “Could the inhabitants of the Roman Empire see the connection between ‘false thinking about God’, debasement of language, and propensity to violence…? The propagandists of the empire were hard at work trying to keep citizens from seeing it” [121]

More ‘Opened Graves’ [128-35]

‘And lack the glory of God’ [137]

Traditional view  Alternative view
Defective performance  Defective perception

“Violence by means of nuclear weapons exposes a death-driven reality in the present that needs an ecological perspective in order to capture fully the ‘ruin and misery’ that looms in its path (3:16). Paul’s right-making counterpoint to this reality, in our time more distinctive than ever, is the cross and the faithfulness of Jesus Christ (3:21-26)” (139).
7 ‘He Is the Father of All of Us’ (Rom. 4:16): Abraham as Ecological Role Model.

Romans 4:1-25 Abraham (polygamist and divorced): sexual minority paradigm

1 What then shall we say was discovered by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?* 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned/credited to him as giving him a just status” [Gen 15:6 LXX]. 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned/counted as a gracious-gift but as a debt owed to him. 5 But to the one not working, but trusting in the one who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned/credited as giving him a just status, just as David also speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God reckones/credits a just status without works:

7 Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered over;
8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not reckon sin.

9 Is this blessedness then only for he circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was reckoned/credited to Abraham as having a just status. 10 How then was it reckoned/credited to him? Was it after he had already been circumcised, or before this? It was not after his circumcision, but when he was still uncircumcised! 11 And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the just status that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised, in order that he should become the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that a just status would be reckoned/credited to them also. 12 As well as the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had when still uncircumcised.

13 For the promised to Abraham and his seed/ semen that he would be heir of the world did not come through Law but through the just status that comes by faith. 14 For if the adherents of Law are to be the heirs, faith becomes empty and the promise is destroyed. 15 For the Law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. 16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his seed/sperm—not only to the adherents of the Law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. 17 As it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations” [Gen 17:5]—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your seed/sperm be” [Gen 15:5]. 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the death of Sarah’s womb. 20 No distrust made him waver concerning God’s promise, but as he gave glory to God he was empowered by faith, 21 fully persuaded that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 That is why his faith was reckoned/credited to him as having a just status.” 23 But the words “it was reckoned/credited to him” were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also to whom it is reckoned/credited, to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

**“What then shall we say? Have we found Abraham to be our forefather according to the flesh?” (Richard Hays, Echoes, 1989:54); ”What then shall we say that we have found out in relation to Abraham, ‘our forefather according to the flesh’” (Douglas Campbell 2009:724; adapting Hays’ translation, but attributing the question to a false teacher in Rome). “In the story line of Romans, Abraham’s hope and God’s right-making in Jesus are whole cloth (4:16-25)” (Tonstad 2016:148).

On Abraham

- Abraham models a way of life and is not only foil for a certain doctrine [justification by faith, not works].
- Abraham’s faith is important, but God’s faithfulness—the object of his faith—is more important.
- Abraham’s relation to land, possession, and people has far-reaching ecological significance.

Theology and Ecology in the Life of Abraham

- Abraham’s sense of vocation has a theological foundation: the faithfulness of God.
- He lives as a wanderer in the Promised Land, leaving a small ecological footprint.
- He earns the respect and admiration of the people of the land and, indirectly,… admiration for God.

Abraham and Lot in Ecological Terms

- Lot: Resident status; settled; Priority; material; Disposition; self-interested; Ideology; acquisitive; Orientation; individualistic
- Abraham: sojourner; spiritual; unselfish; accommodating; communal
Interlude: Death as Liberation. "The Hellenization of Christianity, with its metaphysics of the separate soul, began…with Philo the Jew, a first-century Alexandrian deeply sympathetic to Greek thinking. Drawing on the Stoic idea of *pneuma* as the divine substance breathed into man, Philo proposed a radical body-soul dualism that was foreign to Old Testament faith. He also drew on Plato's *Phaedrus* myth of the ‘fall’ of the soul; dwelling in the body as in a tomb, the soul was condemned to be a ‘pilgrim and sojourner’ while on earth" [p. 166, citing Roy Porter 2003]…. “The most important fact in the history of Christian doctrine was that the father of Christian theology, Origen, was a Platonic philosopher at the school of Alexandria. He built into Christian doctrine the whole cosmic drama of the soul, which he took from Plato, and although later Christian Fathers decided that he took over too much, that which they kept was still the essence of Plato’s philosophy of the soul” [p. 166, citing Werner Jaeger, 1958/65].

"Higher Ground: Romans 5:1-8:39 [159]

- Transition to friendly, intimate tone and inclusive ‘we’ form.
- Section framed by the love of God revealed in the self-giving death of Jesus (5:6-11; 8:31-39).
- Abraham in view at the beginning and ending, not only as a person who is faithful to God, but as a revealer of God’s faithfulness (8:32).
- ‘Widescreen’ to be understood as cosmic perspective, comprehensive narrative, profound existential insight, and exquisite emotional depth” (p. 159).

"Categories of Sin by Degree of Severity [p. 171, Rom. 5.5-11:]

- ‘weak’
- ‘ungodly’
- ‘sinners’
- ‘enemies’
- Question: Which of these categories is most severe and most difficult to solve?” [p.171]

“The passage that marks the thematic zenith in Romans (8.31-39) has in common with the former passage (5.1-11) that it makes the love of God and the death of Jesus a seamless whole, but it is unique for interpreting the death of Jesus apocalyptically, as Beverly Roberts Gaventa shows in her exceptional exposition of Rom. 8.32. Jesus’ death bears witness to the love of God, but the measure of God’s love now has the cosmic conflict as its frame of reference. Paul presents the love of God in widescreen, comprehensively. To put it more bluntly, Jesus dies in the context of a cosmic war; he does not die in the temple precincts to candlelight and soothing organ music, if this, at times is the connotation of the conventional understanding. When Paul now writes that God ‘gave him up’ (*paredoken*) for all of us’ (8.32), God sent Jesus into the lion’s den of conflict. God handed him over with the understanding that demonic powers stood at the ready to do their work. In the context of cosmic conflict God sent forth Jesus to fight—to do battle *for us*—against overwhelming cosmic forces. In Gaventa’s words, ‘when Paul says that God handed over his own Son, he means that God handed him over to anti-god powers’…. ‘Christ died (in battle) for the ungodly’ (5.6); ‘Christ died (in battle) for us (5.8; indeed ‘Christ died in battle) while we were enemies’ (5.10), as if dying under conditions when we were found to be fighting against God on the side of the cosmic powers hostile to us! [p. 177].

“…we have read three times in Romans that God, responding to pagan idolatry, ‘gave them up’ [1.24, 26, 28]….Now, however, the object of the verbal action of giving up is not recalcitrant pagans but Jesus. Paul says that God ‘gave him up (*paredoken*) for all of us (8.32) [p. 178]….“The measure of the love of God is in Romans the death of Jesus. For the magnitude to be seen at full height, death must be delivered from the alien thought world in which it has been held captive through much of the history of Christianity. God’s love is not diminished by acknowledging life’s materiality and death’s biology. Just as ecology is unthinkable apart from materiality, so is the death of Jesus—the measure of the love of God” (180-81).
9 ‘Where Sin Kept Increasing’ (Rom. 5.20) [pp. 182-202]

- The Reign of Death and the End of Death’s Dominion, 5.12-21 [free from “the wrath,” 5:9]  
- The End of the Reign of Sin, 6.1-23 [free from sin, 6:7]  
- Present Empowerment (8.1-17) and Future Deliverance (8:31-39) [free from death, 8:1-2]  

The Love of God and the Death of Jesus, 8.31-39 [p. 182]

Anders Nygren:

- The Reign of Death and the End of Death’s Dominion [183-94] ⇒ Rom. 5.12-14, 15-19. The movement that counts happens between Adam and Christ, while Abraham and Moses recede into the background [p.185]:
  
  Adam ⇒ (Abraham) ⇒ (Moses) ⇒ Christ
  
  ‘(the) one man’
  Sin
  Sinner
  Disobedience
  Trespass
  Transgression
  Judgment
  Condemnation
  Death
  ‘(the) one man’

Exercising of ‘Dominion’ [pp. 190]. Citation of positive Genesis texts and vocabulary to refute Lynn White, Jr. (1967) on our ecological crisis (190-94). “‘Dominion’ in Genesis is a category of trust and responsibility, not a mandate to dominate” [192]. “When a quarter million birds are stuffed into a single shed, unable even to flap their wings, when more than a million pigs inhabit a single farm, never once stepping into the light of day, when every year tens of millions of creatures go to their death without knowing the least measure of human kindness, it is time to question old assumptions, to ask what we are doing and what spirit drives us on” [193, citing Matthew Scully 2002:x].

The End of the Reign of Sin [free from sin; 194-202] ⇒ Rom. 6.1-23

Sin-side of the Story
So that the body of sin…might be destroyed (6.6)
For whoever has died is freed from sin (6.7)

The death he died, he died to sin, once for all (6.10)
So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin (6.11)

Imagery of Participation [p. 197]
- Buried with (6.4)
- United with (6.5)
- Crucified with (6.6)

Lifside of the Story [p. 196]
so we too might walk in newness of life (6.4)
we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his (6.5)
we believe that we will also live with him (6.8)
Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again (6.9)
the life he lives, he lives to God (6.10)

‘Baptized into his death’ Romans 6.1-14
‘Slaves of Righteousness’ Romans 6.15-23 [p.201]

Question Should we continue to sin that grace….  
Response (as seeing) Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus….  
Response (as reckoning) consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God  
Response (as action) present your members to God as instruments of righteousness
10 ‘I Was Once Alive [apart from the Law]’ (Rom. 7.9) [pp. 203-220, “Law”]

“Romans 7 has often been read as a compilation of ‘stages in the life of Paul’ rather than steps in the course of an argument” (p. 203).

Remarriage without Adultery → Rom 7.1-6 [204-07]

Charged Contrasts [p.206]

- Old new
- Death life
- Written code Spirit

‘Is the law sin? (7.7). Apology for the Law → Rom 7.7-12 [207-20]. “Paul’s ‘I’ will… be best understood as speech-in-character. Paul speaking to believers in the house churches in Rome in the person of Eve in Genesis” [p.209]. ‘In Romans 7 Paul…uses the symbolic economy associated with Eve in the scene of the primeval transgression. Paul’s allusion to the Genesis episode is subtle, but it permeates almost the entire chapter and suggests a complex interpretation of temptation and sin’ [Busch cited]. The parallels are striking, especially with respect to deception in Genesis and in Paul’s allusion to the Genesis story [Gen 3:13; Rom 7.11; Gen 3.6] …When the serpent speaks…it is actually Satan who is doing the talking [ApMoses 17.4-5; 18.1-6; 23.4-5] …. A commandment that was at face value ‘for life’ and a generous ordinance, was represented as an all-out prohibition. ‘Did God say’, intones the serpent, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden’? (Gen. 3.1)” [215]

‘Eve’ Story: Key Elements [p.213]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Eve story</th>
<th>Usual view</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dilemma</td>
<td>narrative</td>
<td>introspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot</td>
<td>character of the divine command</td>
<td>transgression, guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning point</td>
<td>distrust and desire</td>
<td>disobedience</td>
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</table>

“J. Louis Martyn does not overstate the case when he says that the law of God has a history. Paul knows what that history is….The law was taken captive before she (Eve) was: ‘sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me’ (7.11)….Unlike Galatians, where Paul alludes to the promulgation of the law at Sinai, saying that the law ‘was ordained through angels by a mediator’ (Gal 3.19),’ it is the perception of the law and not its origin that is the focus in Romans. Two verities are in view in Paul’s representation. First, as he notes, the commandment God gave ‘was for life…’ (Rom. 7.10). That is to say, the commandment had a life-protecting, life-affirming and life-enhancing intent….Second, sin, alias the serpent, seized an opportunity in the commandment (Rom. 7.14), spotting in it a chance to make it to be seen as something other than life-enhancing (Gen. 3.1; Rom 7.10). Third, deception went to work, and the deception was spectacularly successful: it seized ‘an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me’, Paul says in first person singular (Rom. 7.11). The serpent poisoned the well, so to speak, putting a spin on the commandment to make it into the exact opposite of what was intended. This is the ‘Eve story’ in Romans…. Once deception had done its work, the law would no longer be seen as a law that was ‘for life’. Instead, it became an agent of, and facilitator for, sin” (pp. 213-14)…-

“To see the ‘Eve story’ behind the ‘I’ in Romans 7 represents a high shift away from the human-centered, individualistic, and introspective reading that has been usual for this passage…. (p. 219).

‘It was sin’ (7.13) [p. 222]

Sin in Multiple Dimensions [p.222]

- Sin is not only deeds fraught with moral accountability but also a window to human vulnerability.
- Sin’s most impressive feat is its knack for turning the good into bad.
- Sin’s subversive ability is most clearly perceived at the level of narrative, beginning with the serpent’s misrepresentation of the divine command in Genesis.

Depth Perspective on Human Plight [p. 227]

- Split self
- Sin as self and non-self
- Predicament of noble intention vs. botched execution.

Representation of plight in Romans 1:18-32  Representation of plight in Romans 7.7-25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Human and societal</th>
<th>Cosmic and personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Condition</td>
<td>Recalcitrant</td>
<td>Needy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Depraved</td>
<td>Helpless</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexually inflamed</td>
<td>‘Desire’ unspecified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Villain</td>
<td>Victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wretched ‘they’</td>
<td>Wretched ‘I’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apocalyptic tenor</td>
<td>Apparent</td>
<td>Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical narrative</td>
<td>Shallow or absent</td>
<td>Profound and crucial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Stance</td>
<td>Wrath</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Response</td>
<td>Giving up</td>
<td>Right-making</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retributive</td>
<td>Remedial</td>
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</table>

“…the indictment in Rom. 1:18-32 can now more confidently be assigned to the counter-missionaries that appear from time to time in the letter…” [p. 228, again supporting Douglas Campbell 2009].

The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus (Rom 8.2) → Rom 8:1-4 [p. 229]

‘The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus’ (Rom 8.2) [p. 232]

- A strange, convoluted phrase!
- Critical events in the history of the law
  1. The Law falling into the hands of sin.
  2. The Law wrested from the hands of sin and restored to become the Law of the Spirit of Life in the hands of Christ Jesus.

⇒ Rom 8.5-11; 8.12-16 [pp. 234-35]
12 ‘The Whole Creation Groans’ (Rom. 8.22) [pp. 238-60]

“Paul surprises readers of Romans when he…suddenly and without apparent warning turns the pulpit over to nature. Not only does he let non-human creation speak as subject in the text. He adds urgency and weight to the voice by depicting what nature says as the cry of a woman in labor (Rom. 8.22), thereby harnessing the strength of a loud voice and the prestige of a powerful Old Testament image. The figure is arresting by any standard because labor pain is excruciating to a degree that most men will never experience anything like it. Conrad Gempf [1994] breaks down the pain associated with labor into helpful categories by describing it as (1) ‘intense and total pain’; (2) ‘helpless pain’; (3) ‘productive pain’, and (4) ‘pain that must run its course’. In Paul’s usage there is a preference for ‘productive’ or ‘hopeful’ pain (8.19, 20, 21)” [p. 238].

→ Rom.8.18-23  
Rom 8.15-17

Making Noise in Romans

- Creation groans (8.22): “the whole creation groans together”
- We groan (8.23): “we ourselves…groan”
- The Spirit groans (8.26): [the] Spirit intercedes with inexpressible groans

Verse by Verse → Rom 8.19

‘All Creation Groans’ Vocabulary

- Ktisis refers to non-human creation and especially to living non-human creation
- groans suffering and hope both expressed in the form of groaning
- hope anchored in promise and not only in need

→ Isaiah 11.6-9  
Rom 8.20  
Gen 3.17-18

‘Curse’ vs. ‘Futility’

- Note the voices within and without the Bible that make ‘curse’ a key word in ever-worsening depictions of God’s benevolence.
- ‘Moral ecology’ is a category of interdependence and not an element of divine retribution

“…in both [human and non-human] realms, ‘freedom’ stands in opposition to ‘slavery’ so as to make liberation the most telling term for what God has set out to do for human and non-human reality alike (8.21; cf. 6.18, 22; 8.2) [p., 253].

God Groaning → Rom 8:24-28

Closing Liturgical Dialogue…. “If we still wonder why Paul brings up the subject of non-human creation, the best answer is that Paul was not the kind of thinker tradition made him out to be. His widescreen gospel is bigger, more earthy, and far more inclusive. In all and for all, including non-human reality, hope is ascendant. The night of plight is receding before the light of the revelation of the faithfulness of God. In this hope the entire non-human creation ‘has been groaning in labor pains until now’ (8.22) [p. 260].

13
13 ‘Out of [ek] Zion will come the deliverer’ (Rom. 11.26 → Isa 59:20 to [Gr. ho hryomenos] Zion).

“It is written”, Paul says, but he does not repeat verbatim what is written. ‘And a Redeemer (Hebr. goel, Gr, ho hryomenos) will come to (heneken [for the sake of]) Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob’, is Isaiah’s wording (Isa 59:20). Where the Old Testament appears to say that the Redeemer will come to Zion, Paul says that the Redeemer will come from Zion’ (Rom 11:26). The benefit to Israel is indispensable in either version, but the Redeemer that comes from Zion will not be restricted to a mission that is meant to benefit one group to the exclusion of others” (p. 265; see 261-85).

Rom 2:1-3
9:20 (p. 261)….“The contentious tone of the rhetorical exchange in Romans 9 suggests that Paul’s diction has reference…to individuals who do not belong to the Roman churches (9:14-33)….Campbell argues that many difficulties in Romans 9-11 ‘can be resolved in large measure if we consider this text as part of an ongoing debate with the Teacher, who is…a learned Jewish Christian still committed in some sense to circumcision and law observance by any converts to Christ’ [Deliverance of God, pp. 771-772].”

Rom 9:[1] 2-5 (p. 264-67)

“Visions of Inclusion in Isaiah” → Isa 19:18-25 “On that day” 5x (267-74).
“The take-home message of this passage in Isaiah is
(1) inclusion in God’s redemptive purpose of erstwhile enemies [Egypt, Assyria];
(2) a reconfiguration of the chosen people that makes the Egyptians, too, belong to the elect;
(3) exodus-like deliverance for erstwhile oppressors now counted among the oppressed; and
(4) a notion of being united to the point of speaking the same language” (274).

Isaiah Singing Solo [p. 270]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Perspective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isa 11:1-10</td>
<td>Universal; Inclusion of the Gentiles; Restoration in the non-human realm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isa 19:18-25</td>
<td>Eschatological; Egyptians as God’s chosen people; Exodus for the Egyptians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isa 42:1-4; 49:3-6</td>
<td>Suffering Servant; Inclusion of the Gentiles; Restoration in the non-human realm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isa 56:1-8</td>
<td>Gathering and inclusion specifically of people previously excluded Membership by confession rather than ethnicity ‘house of prayer for all people’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The Servant Songs in Isaiah project a similar message in a slightly different idiom” (274). →
Isa. 42.1-4; 49:3-6;

“The momentum toward a universal, all-inclusive mission is not slowed in the last part of Isaiah” (277) →
56:1, 6, 7, 65:16

→ Rom 10:6-9 (p. 283)

Isaiah and Paul in Concert: Romans 9-11 [p. 284]

- Paul is not indifferent to the ‘Jewish’ question (9:1-5) and neither is God (9:6; 11:1-2)
- Message of inclusion—not arbitrary exclusion
- Exposition of God’s mercy and generosity
- Proof of infinite resourcefulness (God) and theological imagination (Paul)
14 The Mercies of God in an Ecological Perspective (Rom. 12.1-21) [pp. 286-308]

Points of Exclamation [p. 287]
- Rom. 8.31-39 Exclamations at the conclusion of 5.1-8.39
- Rom. 11.33-36 Exclamations at the conclusion of 9.1-11.36

Shape of Embodied Community [p. 287]
- An alternative community (12.1-21)
- Community and government (13:1-14)
- The ‘weak’ and the ‘strong’ (14.1-15.7)

Compassion in Action → Rom. 12.1-2

Encouragement at Bookends [p. 288]
- ‘I urge and encourage (parakalo) you, by the compassions of God’ (12.1)
- ‘God of steadfastness and encouragement (parakleseos)’ (15.5)

Compassion in Human Terms [seven spiritual gifts]. “If preservation of biodiversity in the ecosphere is one of the main ecological concerns, Paul has an analogous concern for diversity in human relationships….His exhortation in Romans includes a vision of human diversity that is respectful of difference, mindful of varieties of gifts and mutual interdependence, and conscious that wholeness is possible only in community” [p. 290-91 → Rom. 12.3-8; 12.9-21]. Paul perhaps intended to curtail charismatic influences lacking in restraint and sobriety (Jewett 738) and his list of spiritual gifts omits speaking in tongues, a vexing issue in Corinth (Dunn 735). “His use of the body metaphor is telling not only for pointing out that the body has many members but also for the claim that ‘individually we are members one of another’ (12.5). This is similar to the Johannine concept of mutual indwelling (‘perichoresis’), reflected in Jesus’ prayer…(Jn 17.21) [p. 291]…. ‘Let the love (he agape) be genuine’ [Rom 12.9]…. Here…the definite article ‘indicates that it is not love in general but specifically Christian love already manifest in the Roman churches that now comes under discussion [and] reinforces a life-orientation that is self-giving, dedicated to the good of others and to the building up of the community” [p. 292].

Compassion in Ecological Terms. “To [Jeremy] Bentham [1748-1842], the question ‘is not to know whether the animal can think, reason, or speak…The first and decisive question would rather be whether animals can suffer’….Paul… makes it his task to inscribe an ethic of compassion on the believing community in Rome. Divine compassion, the grounding element of his vision (12.1), is inclusive and not only for the benefit of human beings (8:19-22)” [p. 293-94; cf. modern ethical use of data on fetus pain felt in abortion processes].

‘Seeds’ of Compassion at Creation:
- Ecology and Theology
  - Seeds Generosity
  - Land Sustainability
  - Animals Mercy

The Divine Economy of Seeds → Gen. 1.11-12, 29-30
The Economy of Land → Gen 2:4-7, 15; 3:23; 4:9,
Compassion and Animals → Gen 1:20.21

Mercy in Ecological Terms [p. 307]
- Seeds Recognition of seeds as the earliest form of eco-theology—as gift and generosity.
- Land Recognition of land as gift and shared space, not commodity.
- Animals Recognition of animals as sentient creatures with God-given rights.

“Paul prescribes ideals and conduct in Romans that are mostly concerned with human ecology, ecology still understood as the science of relationships. His appeal is based on ‘the mercies of God’ (12.1), however, and the mercies of God are expressed in seed, land, and the love of non-human creation. Likewise, ‘by the mercies of God’ a believer’s ethic of mercy must in the twenty-first century extend to seed, to land, and to the suffering of non-human creatures as a matter of utmost urgency” (p. 308).
Excursus: Animals. Recognition of animals as sentient creatures with God-given rights.

Compassion and Animals [304-308; cf. debates on abortion rights and on Spanish bull fights!].

Gen 1:20.21 “Here...abundance is the key; there will not merely be ‘living creatures’ but ‘an abundance of living creatures’ (Gen. 1.20). And then, for the first time in the Bible, we hear God talking to what God has created. ‘And God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth’” (Gen. 1.22, NKJV). Here, God speaks to Creation, and God’s first word is a blessing. Two more blessings appear in Genesis,...one on human creation and one on all creation (Gen. 1.28; 2.1-3), but they follow the pattern of the blessing on non-human creation almost word for word. Non-human creatures are first in line to receive a blessing that has mercy and generosity written all over it....

It is all too evident that in the course of the last two centuries the traditional forms for treatment of the animals have been turned upside down by the joint developments of zoological, ethological, biological and genetic forms of knowledge, which remains inseparable from techniques [see Jacques Ellul 1955] of intervention into their object, from the transformation of the actual object, and from the milieu and world of their object, namely, the living animal [Jacques Derrida 2008:25].

“Matthew Scully...has tried to combine that absence of mercy in to one single picture. As to the reality of large scale factory farms in the first decade of the twenty-first century, a mere four companies produce 81 percent of the cows brought to the market. 73 percent of the sheep, half our chickens, and some 60 percent of the hogs. As to mercy, from the 355,000 pigs slaughtered every day in America, even the smallest mercies have been withdrawn’. These animals have been genetically manipulated in order to reduce the time from artificial insemination to slaughter and from slaughter to the consumer’s table; they have been deprived of the opportunity to live out their instincts of mating and nesting; they are largely immobilized in order to reduce caloric waste; and they are tightly confined in buildings that, were the fans that circulate air to ensure survival turned off even for a short time, the animals would suffocate....

“Timothy Pachirat [2011:54] has concentrated on the industrialized slaughter that follows on the heels of industrialized breeding practices. As of 2009, nine billion animals were killed for food every year in the United States alone. Of these, there were some 8,500 billion chickens, 246 million turkeys, 114 million pigs, 33 million cattle, 23 million ducks, three million sheep and lambs, and one million calves....Pachirat went to work at a large slaughterhouse in Omaha, Nebraska, intending to use his findings in a doctoral thesis at Yale University on the politics of mass slaughter of animals and the policy of concealment. There...he witness a cow or an ox killed every twelve seconds day in and day out, detailing the penetration of the cow’s skull by the large steel bolt at the hands of the designated ‘knocker’, the gushing forth of brain matter and blood upon the bolt’s retraction from the cow’s head, the death throes of the animal, the not infrequent need to shoot it again, and then the passage of the animal on the conveyor belt into other specialized and sequestered venues in the facility before appearing on the shelves of supermarkets with little remaining evidence of the sentient being the cow once was. A sentient being going from life to death in seconds—every twelve seconds—deprived of the dignity of creature-hood and the ontological and theological recognition as a creature of value” [306].

“The sentence of animals and human compassion are at the heart of Isaac Bashevis Singer’s short story, ‘The Slaughterer’. In this story, Yoineh Meir is forced to accede to the villagers’ demand that he be their slaughterer, but he cannot stand it because he quickly discovers that the animals are not willing victims.

His ears were beset by the gawking of hens, the crowing of roosters, the gobbling of geese, and lowing of oxen, the mooing and bleating of calves and goats; wings fluttered, claws tapped on the floor. The bodies refused to know any justification or excuse—every body resisted in its own fashion, tried to escape, and seemed to argue with the Creator to its last breath.

Yoineh Meir’s revulsion is so terrifying that it leads him to end his life. For Franz Kafka, a similar but more hopeful ending comes on a visit to the Berlin Aquarium. ‘Suddenly he began to speak to the fish in their illuminated tanks. ‘Now at last I can look at you in peace. I don’t eat you any more,’ says Max Brod of the experience. It could be more than a moot point that the voices expressing compassion for animal suffering more often than not are ‘secular’ voices. It we try to put this into perspective for Romans as a whole, these voices are due Paul’s commendation earlier in the letter. ‘So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?’ (Rom. 2.26)” [307-08].
15 Governing Authorities (Rom. 13.1) [pp. 309-333]

Views on Paul and ‘Governing Authorities’ in Romans 13:1-7 [p.309]
1. ‘Paul did not write it’.
2. ‘I wish Paul had not written it’.
3. Paul wrote it, but what did he write?

Approaches to Romans 13:1-7 [p. 312….315]

- **Parody** Coded message: Paul does not mean what he seems to say but the opposite.
- **Irony** Coded message similar to parody but less pronounced.
- **Hybrid speech** Limited options…[:] the oppressed has to make do with the language of the oppressor.
- **Plain language** Paul means what he says but it must be qualified by the situation and the context.

**Love Does No Wrong to a Neighbor** [pp. 322-24] ⇒ Rom 13.8-10; Gal 5.14; Mk 12.28-34; Mt 22.36-40
“In Paul’s conception the commandments are ‘summed up’ or ‘joined at the head’ in one word, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ (Rom. 13.9; Lev. 19.18, 34). ‘No dual commandment but rather one commandment. I regard this as an absolutely revolutionary act,’ [Jacob] Taubes says of Paul’s apparent contraction….In Galatians, Paul is even more pointed, writing that ‘the entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself” (Gal. 5.14). The variant from Jesus’ answer in the Synoptic Gospels is remarkable in that, in Mark and Matthew, ‘the greatest and first commandment is the premise for the second commandment (Mk. 12.28-34; Mt. 22.36-40), but the difference is only on the surface. In the Gospels, too, a person’s true devotion shows itself by that person’s relationship to the ‘second’ commandment, and the entire discussion in Mark and Matthew lays bare the fallacy that it is possible to love God while remaining indifferent to the neighbor. In Paul’s argument, the first commandment is subsumed in the second but not negated by it.” [323].


‘Knowing’ Time
- time passing eschatological meaning—’the end is nearing’
- time turning apocalyptic meaning—the old order overturned

**Governing Authorities and Ecology pp. 327-33**
“...the separation of powers between worldly and spiritual is absolutely necessary’ says [Jacob] Taubes. This is well said and in my view a fitting conclusion to the way Paul structures the relationship between the believer and the governing authorities (13.1-7). Obedience for the sake of conscience means a citizen of impeccable integrity (135), but it also means a citizen who will not be fooled when the call for unselfish service to the nation is harnessed for the purpose of enabling the nation’s selfish conduct in the world. Paul’s good citizen may, when conscience dictates, decide on martyrdom over obedience to the state. The ecological outlook in all of this is bleak…, but the eschatological horizon that concludes Paul’s admonition by contrast, is as bright as it is necessary…(13.11-12) [332-33].
16 ‘The Weak Eat Only Vegetables’ (Rom. 14.2) [pp. 334-57]

Then and Now: Reframing ‘Food’ and ‘Days’
• Then communal concern; mission
• Now ecological concern; communal concern; mission

What to Eat [337-48] ⇒ Rom 14:1-4

Identity of ‘the Weak’ and ‘the Strong’ [p. 339]

Proponents
‘the weak’
‘the strong’

Majority view
Jewish ‘rigid’ believers
Gentile ‘liberal’ believers

Nanos
(J Dunn, Barclay)
Mixed ethnic identity

Karris
‘types’: not specifically Jewish/Gentile
unspecific ‘types’

Reasoner
foreign born cosmopolitan Romans
native born patriotic Romans

Bolton
Torah-observant ultra-traditionalists
Torah-observant traditionalists

Contrasts: John Barclay and Beverly Roberts Gaventa on ‘the Weak’ and ‘the Strong’

Barclay
Gaventa

Problem group
‘the weak’
‘the strong’

Characterization
‘faith-deficit’
‘faith-haver’

Defect
lack of faith (‘the weak’)
lack of concern (‘the strong’)

Key concern
subjective
social and soteriological

Prognosis
‘the weak’ to vanish
‘the weak’ to remain

Adjudication
preference for ‘the strong’
preference for ‘the weak’

Judging—and the Good News [p. 347]
• Judging those without
No—see Rom 2:1-3
• Judging those within
No—see Rom 14:3-5; 14:10, 13


Judging [351-53]. “Paul believes in accountability (14:10-11; cf. 12:19), but he does not put trust in a human structure to enforce it” (351)
⇒ Rom 14:10.13.
⇒ Rom 14:14-23
⇒ Rom 15:1-7

Food and Sabbath in an Ecological Perspective [353-57] “The animal-based economy of the twenty-first century is ethically untenable and ecologically unsustainable in ecological terms contributing more to greenhouse gases and global warming than transportation. In ethical and eco-theological terms, factory farming represents bone-chilling, unprecedented cruelty to non-human creatures. This assessment follows from the fact that ninety-nine percent of all land animals eaten or used to produce milk and eggs in the United States are factory farmed”, the statistic only slightly different in other industrialized countries….Will the person who is sensitized ‘by the mercies of God’ be insensitive to the suffering of pigs, choosing to abstain not for reasons of ritual impurity but for reasons of compassion?….In an eco-theological perspective…the Sabbath will be more than a Jewish boundary marker, and it will not be held hostage to the law- vs. grace polarity that has dominated Protestant theology. Instead, it will be a feature of the biblical narrative bursting at the seams with untapped theological, existential, and practical benefits….The ecological working principle of the Sabbath is cessation, meaning that the Sabbath speaks the native language of ecology: it is aware of the need to cease and desist (Gen. 2:1-3)….‘Without the Sabbath quiet, history becomes the self-destruction of humanity’ [Moltmann, casting the Sabbath as a substantial spiritual and ecological remedy]….Seeing the character of God reflected in the Sabbath restores to the Sabbath lost prestige that is both theological and ecological” [357].
17 ‘The Root of Jesse Shall Come’ (Rom. 15.12 [8-12] ⇒ Isa. 11.10) [pp. 358-83]

**Vision of Inclusion—and Vision of God ⇒ Rom 15.8-13**

truth of God  
name of God  
God  
mercy of God  
glory of God

Christ sings God’s praise among the Gentiles  
Gentiles sing God’s praise with God’s people  
All, Jews and Gentiles, sing God’s praise

**Acclamations**
- God is the subject
- Right-making
- Vindication

“The acknowledged’ magnificent conclusion’ lets Isaiah have the last word (Rom. 15.12; Isa. 11.10). ‘And again Isaiah says’, Paul writes, counting on the voice of his prophetic forerunner to make the case [:]

The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;  
in him the Gentiles shall hope (Rom. 15.12; Isa. 11.1)’” [p. 370].

**Part 1 ⇒ Isa. 11.1-5**

**Senses of the Right-Maker (Isa.11.3) [p. 373]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organ</th>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>smell</td>
<td>affinity, disposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ears</td>
<td>hearing</td>
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<td>Eyes</td>
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**Part 2 ⇒ Isa. 11.6-9**

**Part 3 ⇒ Isa. 11.10; cf. Rom 15.12.** “‘resting place’…comes with shattering theological import. Psalm 132 calls out to God as though God is the wandering exile yearning for permanence and rest” ⇒ Ps. 132:8-16; cf..Isa. 66.1-2

‘The Root of Jesse’: Reading the Fine Print [p. 379]
- ‘the nations will turn to him inquisitively’—looking for answers and relief.
- ‘Resting place’ means that God, too, is presently a wanderer.
- ‘Resting place’ has an ecological connotation, the shepherd and the herd together at rest

**Matters of Mission ⇒ Rom. 15.14-21; Isaiah 52.15**

“Hope....In Romans, hope rests not only on a world set right by concerted human action. It also refers to the eschatological hope that lights up the letter throughout. This, the eschatological hope, is the ultimate remedy for the Reign of Death that Paul describes in Romans. For Abraham, this means a stance of ‘hoping against hope’ (4:18). For the present-day believer, it means to boast ‘in our hope of sharing the glory of God’ (5.2) and to say that ‘hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us’ (5.5). Hope entails an unseen reality (8.24), says Paul, but the hope is nevertheless ‘seeable’ because non-human creation sees it and waits for it to be fulfilled, swelling the ranks of those who live in hope (8.20). Hope is the theme-word in the letter-ending...(15.4)....Hope is set loose in the world, anchored at one end in the faithfulness of the root of Jesse, who came, and in the other end in the hope that ‘the root of Jesse shall come’ in a sense that is still future.... Hope may well serve as his last word in Romans and the word most needed today” ⇒ Rom. 15.13.
Appendix: ‘Wrath’ in Romans (384-90 [1:18 + 2:8; 3:5; 5:9]). “‘The wrath of God’ (orge theou)…(Rom 1.18) …is by most interpreters seen as a key premise for what follows. Salvation, ultimately, means salvation from the ‘wrath of God’ [Rom 5:9], and the divine wrath works itself out as retribution [traditionally meaning ‘that the reprobate will suffer torment for all eternity’]. In this commentary I question the central role allotted to ‘wrath’ and ‘retribution’ in traditional interpretation of Romans [note: alternatively, God’s wrath against all oppression is part of God’s ‘Good News’ for all the oppressed; see Hanks’ doctoral dissertation, 1972]. Instead, I privilege a reading that runs straight from human need to divine right-making.…

[1] Conceptual Caveats. “‘But if our injustice (adikia [oppression]) serves to confirm the [liberating] justice of God…, what should we say? That God is unjust to inflict (the) wrath…on us? I speak in a human way’…(Rom 3:5). Strictly speaking, Paul…is here—gratuitously—acknowledging that he is putting to use concepts and terms that are ‘according to human norms’…and that caution will be in order.…

[2] Interpretative Caveats. “In his study of wrath-language in the New Testament, A. T. Hanson finds in Romans more references to ‘the wrath’ than in all the rest of Paul’s letters put together, and he takes Rom. 1.18-32 to be ‘what we might almost call a handbook to the working of ‘the wrath’ [The Wrath of the Lamb, 1957]….God allows the wrath; he does not inflict it’ Hanson’s conception is distinctive for seeing the wrath as impersonal: it does not describe an attitude….Steven H. Travis agrees that ‘the wrath’ refers to sin working itself out as ‘intrinsic punishment’, but he takes issue with other features in Hanson’s interpretation…. Travis …faults Hanson for seeing ‘the wrath’ in impersonal terms only. In his view, Rom. 1.18-32 describes sin as ‘a personal affront to God which is met by his personal reaction’ (386.)

[3] Rhetorical and Thematic Caveats. “Rhetorical and thematic caveats are related but not identical. The rhetorical question refers chiefly to whether we hear another voice than Paul’s in the leading wrath passage in Romans (1.18-32), discussed in Chapter 5….If…the leading passage about ‘the wrath of God’ (1.18-32 looms large in Romans because it is a key tenet in the message of counter missionaries along the lines suggested by Douglas Campbell [2009], the rhetorical dynamics of the letter are far more fluid and complex…it means that conceptions of ‘the wrath of God’ appear in the letter for reasons that have more to do with the message and activity of hostile opponents than with the core convictions in Paul’s proclamation” (388).

[4] Contextual and Theological Caveats “The existence of supra- and super-human forces is not in doubt in Paul’s letters, as seen…in Romans in the reality of hostile ‘angels’, ‘rulers’, and ‘powers’ (Rom. 8.38 [after citing 7.7-12; 8.31-39; 2 Cor 4.4; 11.14]). These forces or powers…are not only metaphors or the sum total of Roman imperial reality, and their ontological status is not reducible to human powers only. The story-character of this aspect in Paul’s outlook is most evident in 1 Thess. 2.1-12, a text that has not been given the attention it deserves….The depiction of a final unmasking in 2 Thessalonians circumscribes the divine agency with respect to ‘the wrath’ in several ways.

- First, this conception of ‘the day of wrath’ has a cosmic texture and is not only the divine judgment on human beings.

- Second, God’s rule is portrayed in terms of loosening of restraint and then, finally absence (2 Thess. 2.6-7). Execution of ‘the wrath’ happens with God one step removed, as though God stands outside the picture on the day when ‘there will be wrath and fury’ (Rom 2:8).

- Third, the unmasking and undoing of evil has a revelatory character all the way through till the end: the Lord Jesus will destroy ‘the lawless one with the breath of his mouth, bringing him to naught by the epiphany of his coming’ (2 Thes. 2:8…). ‘Breath of his mouth’ is an allusion to the reality and right-making ways of ‘the shoot from the stump of Jesse’ (Isa. 11:1, 4), and ‘epiphany’ means that the divine reality is revealed” (388-90).